

Clinical Cases.

REPORTS OF CASES OF INSANITY FROM THE INSANE DEPARTMENT OF THE PHILA- DELPHIA HOSPITAL.*

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We design from time to time to furnish notes of the more interesting cases of insanity occurring in the Insane Department of the Philadelphia Hospital. It is our purpose not only to select the striking cases, but also to study some cases of all types in detail ; for while the reporting of clinical cases has been carried almost to an extreme in some departments of medicine, comparatively little work of this kind has been done in the field of psychiatry.

CASE I.—*Paretic Dementia.*

Unsystematized delusions of grandeur of extraordinary character, with inequality of the pupils, and general physical depression, stamp the following case as one of paretic dementia, although there is a curious absence of some of the most common and decided symptoms of this affection, such as staggering speech, tremor, paresis, and apoplectiform or epileptiform attacks.

B——, admitted March 30, 1886 ; white, married, age fifty-seven, hotel keeper, common-school education.

His height is 5 feet 9 inches ; weight, 138 lbs. He is slender and poorly nourished. His head is well shaped and symmetrical. His expression varies somewhat with the mood he is in, but one of sadness predominates, even when he is talking excitedly of his great wealth, etc. His pupils are variable at times ; the left pupil is noticeably contracted, and will not respond to light. His sight

* Notes of several of these cases were carefully prepared by Dr. Geo. M. Wells, formerly resident physician to the Insane Department of the Philadelphia Hospital.

is somewhat impaired, but he is presbyopic, having used spectacles several years. Hearing appears to be normal. The respiratory murmur is good. No lesion of the heart can be discovered; his pulse is rapid but strong, 90 per minute. His blood-vessels are atheromatous. His tongue is pale; appetite capricious.

The urine is amber-colored, acid in reaction, sp. gr. 1.026, slight turbidity, but no sediment after standing twenty-four hours. Microscopical examination reveals amorphous urates, a few uric-acid crystals, some oxalate-of-lime crystals, and epithelial cells. No albumen can be detected by heat or nitric acid.

So far as is known there is no insanity in the family.

For several weeks, perhaps months, prior to March 27, 1886, the patient had been noticed to act strangely. He was naturally high-tempered, irritable at times, and easily excited, but at the same time was exceedingly kind-hearted. During the past year he had several times threatened to kill himself, but had never made any attempt to do so. For several weeks prior to admission he would have spells of great depression, would worry greatly about business matters, and became exceedingly irritable. He would frequently hire a coupé and, after being driven from place to place, would be unable to pay, and would then insist that the carriage was his own and that he need not pay for it. This conduct caused his arrest and confinement in a station-house, where he was examined, pronounced to be insane, and sent to the hospital.

He was a moderate drinker. For about six years past it was reported he had been especially interested in a certain young woman, and since his admission she has been constantly uppermost in his mind. He is constantly calling her to come to him, wanting to send for her, imagining she is in the asylum, in the next room, etc. He seldom speaks of his wife, although she visited him soon after admission. He has delusions of grandeur—of wealth and power. He has also hallucinations of sight and hearing, and at times of taste.

May 3d (five weeks after admission).—His mental condition is very much the same as when admitted. He has lost flesh noticeably. Several days ago, when attempting to scale the fence, he fell and severely sprained his left ankle, and probably also produced a slight fracture of the external malleolus. A plaster dressing was applied, to which he objected vigorously, saying he could cure himself, as he was the Holy Ghost and knew all about such things.

May 10th.—The swelling of the ankle is greatly reduced. Restraint is necessary to keep him in bed, and to keep the dressing on. He has delusions of great wealth; says he owns thousands of diamond mines, and that he has paved the streets with them seven-teen feet thick. He has been telephoning to the young woman before referred to to come to him. He will call aloud making a request, answer himself *sotto voce*, and then repeat the answer aloud.

May 12th.—When asked about his wealth this morning, his re-

ply and further talk was as follows : " Yes, I own millions, billions, trillions, a million thousand billions of them ; why, the streets are paved with them, diamonds seventeen feet thick. * * * I 'll give you a set of them thirteen pair of rings. Oh, I 've got them all, made them ; why, G—d d—n it, I made every thing, I am Jesus Christ." On being told that he had said he was the Holy Ghost, he replied : " So I am the Holy Ghost, G—d d—n you, there are seven of them and I made them all ! Call S— ; telephone to her to send my clothes. Yes, I own the whole world. It is full of giants seventeen feet high. Now grow forty feet ; if you don't I 'll kill you."

May 16th.—" Oh, I own them all, I own every thing. I have billions, millions, trillions, billions. I can go everywhere. Telegraph to Jesus Christ to come here ; I want him ; I am married to his sister. I have two of the prettiest daughters ever you saw, but you can't have them. I want them myself. I know you. I am going to marry them." * * * " I made every thing,—sun, moon, and stars. I am going to make a new sun, so there wont be any more night." On being told to make two, he said. " No, G—d d—n it, one 's enough. If you don't shut up I wont make any. * * * Now grow forty feet, d—n you. Begin at once."

May 18th.—He has been telegraphing to Wanamaker for new suits of clothes, and also to Jesus Christ, each time saying that his orders would be carried out, or answering *sotto voce*, and then repeating the words aloud. He says he owns a million billion of elephants, all eighteen feet high, and that they can move faster than the devil. He says that he is President, but that Cleveland is acting for him. Mayor Smith is also acting in his stead.

May 24th.—He has been ballooning and sailing in ships all made of gold, making a trip with Jesus Christ.

June 3d.—He is very quiet, not inclined to talk. He says it is all a damned lie ; he does not own any thing ; even his clothes have been stolen from him, but that he will fix the thief. Physically he has grown much weaker and thinner. His appetite is very poor. Milk and eggs are about the only kind of food he will take. He is also receiving whiskey.

June 18th.—He has been comparatively quiet for two or three days, and is inclined to sleep. He takes his food better, however. He is still destructive at times ; he will tear his bedclothes into shreds, also his clothing.

June 28th.—He says that he went through the North and the South pole. He wrote the first Bible that was ever printed, but it was the worst G—d d—ned job he ever did. He has the finest stock in the world. He makes the first Mexican horse in the world. He never told a lie in the world, and never would. The three best dictionaries in the world are Webster's, Worcester's, and another one whose name he does not remember,—but that he made them all.

His condition changed but little from day to day.

August 10th.—Since the last record he has had two attacks of almost complete collapse, lasting some hours, from both of which

he emerged under the use of revulsives to the chest and extremities, and stimulants internally and hypodermically. After the attacks his mental condition was perceptibly improved for at least twenty-four hours, being able to remember things and people he could not before, and speaking more rationally. His delusions are now those of *grandeur* interspersed with others of poisoning. He says that he is worth all the money in the world, and owns all the ships; that he made the first man; and that he wrote the first Bible when he was only three years of age. Has attacks of wrath, usually from being thwarted in some purpose, or from the presence of a man he dislikes. His delusions of being poisoned are always present, but he thinks that milk counteracts the poison. When he is in a happy frame of mind he thinks the poison is for the time counteracted. He is excitable, but not as aggressive in the expression of his delusions, which, however, are still exalted.

Both pupils are somewhat contracted, and the left is distinctly smaller than the right. He eats and drinks excessively.

CASE II.—*Paranoia*.

This case of *paranoia*, or *monomania with delusions*, furnishes a good contrast to the case just presented in the character of the delusions, which, although varying in their expression, are of a distinctly systematized character. Some secondary mental deterioration has evidently taken place.

P., admitted June 12, 1885; æt. forty-two, born in England, white, single, seamstress, Protestant, good education.

Her height is 4 feet 10 inches; weight, 86 lbs. She is slender and delicate-looking, but erect and well formed. Hair and eyes are dark. Her expression is pleasant, but rather sad.

Her general health is fairly good, and physical examination fails to reveal any organic disease of heart or lungs. Heart action, however, is irregular; pulse, 84. The respiratory murmur is rather feeble. Examination of urine reveals no renal disease. Appetite and digestion are poor, and bowels habitually costive.

Her father was insane and died with phthisis; her mother also died of phthisis. She has no relatives living.

No satisfactory previous history has been obtained. About thirteen years ago she began to have delusions of persecution. Upon admission to the hospital, and for a short time previous, the subject of spiritualism was her all-absorbing talk.

She is extremely clean in her habits, not destructive, and has never attempted suicide; is quiet and lady-like. She is said to have premeditatively attacked her sister at one time.

The following is one account given by the patient of herself:

"I was born in England, but brought to this country when too young to recollect any thing about the trip. I am antagonized by the house of Orange, and they are trying to set aside my birth-right and to break the link in the chain of my house. As to the house to which I belong, I decline to state; that is something for

others to find out. Since I was born I have been gifted with second sight—I mean the power to see and recognize the spirits of the dead. They do not speak to me audibly, but their thoughts are communicated instantly, so that I know their conversation.

“I was poisoned with belladonna seven years ago at the Pennsylvania Hospital; it was first put into my soup. Several others were poisoned at the same time in order to get at me without suspicion. The poisoning was a Nihilistic plot of the house of Orange, who were my enemies. The poison was administered for two years in very small doses.”

July 4th, she handed in a letter containing an account of the plot laid for her ruin at the Pennsylvania Hospital. This was given in the form of a dying confession from one of the parties interested in the plot. She also gave some account of the plans that were laid against her, and said that “some have reported me dead, and are following it up by scandal, coercion, and finally imprisonment in the Hospital for the Insane in Blockley, fearing that the truth should come out as to their doings.”

July 7th.—A note is found signed “Emilie,” and stating: “I am clairvoyant, so-called, in medicine, and will state some facts which ought to be known at the present time. It is the foundation of medical science. People are being made victims of vile practices in a way not recognized in the past.”

“As Belladonna is used in the practice. I wish to give some points that are not generally understood. It is a very cold poison and affects the eye-sight; it injures permanently the eye-sight on the lower natural plane, introducing the eye more keenly into the internal nature, a plane we have no right to invade. This is a plane opened to society in distinction to a higher one, which is a gift of God. During its course it produces the symptoms, all its corresponding diseases, affecting corresponding parts of the body, with this difference that the symptoms are apparently real, but pass more quickly, and each may be followed by another one so quickly as to baffle the skill of the physicians under the present remedies. The parties may be very near death one hour and the next apparently well, so much so as to at last lose the entire sympathy of people; for they are apt to attribute it to a growing disposition to insanity, or to regard it as hysterical. Owing to the constant fluctuations of the animal spirits, they are one moment feeling well and cheerful, then suddenly almost prostrated without any apparent reason for it.”

July 14, 1885.—Her mental and physical condition are unchanged. She still continues to write notes about herself in the same rambling style.

August 14th.—She is wilful and obstinate, thinks herself superior to the people about her. She is usually quiet and likes to be alone.

February 14, 1886.—She thinks an attempt is being made to poison her in the hospital. She says the hot air of the register is full of a poisonous dust, and that the hot water is full of poison.

She also believes that the room which she occupies was formerly occupied by a small-pox patient, and still contains the germs of the disease.

CASE III.—*Sexual Perversion.*

J. M., admitted March 17, 1886, is twenty-two years old, born in Philadelphia, white, single, comber of wool, common-school education.

His height 5 feet 7½ inches, weight 139 lbs., is of medium size rather poorly nourished, and has a simple, meaningless, and, at the same time, anxious expression.

Head 22 inches in circumference; hair light-brown, eyes blue, and lips very pale. The respiratory murmur is normal; the chest somewhat flattened. The heart is normal; no valvular lesion; pulse 90.

The urine is amber-colored, faint acid reaction. It shows no sediment after standing twenty-four hours, sp.gr. 1.021. No albumen is found by heat or nitric-acid tests. The microscope shows a few triple phosphates and oxalate-of-calcium crystals. The tongue is pale but clean; the bowels inclined towards constipation; appetite fair. There is no bodily injury excepting a few slight scars. Sight and hearing both appear to be normal. The genitalia are normal in every respect.

No insanity can be traced in the family. Father and paternal uncle were both hard drinkers, and most probably died from the effects of alcohol. A sister died at nine years of age of hydrocephalus.

He was effeminate from childhood, but this never attracted much attention. Prior to 1875 he would leave home and keep his family in ignorance of his whereabouts. He obtained employment, but lost it several times on account of inattentive and foolish actions. A week prior to his admission to the hospital, he returned home from one of his wanderings, and acted in a more than usually foolish manner. He talked strangely and excitedly, was arrested at his mother's request, and, after being examined, was pronounced insane and sent to the hospital.

For some time past he has talked constantly upon religious subjects, saying he was going to study for the priesthood, and finally imagined that he was a priest. He also became very much excited over the Knights of Labor question.

He has hallucinations of sight and hearing; he says he sees people strangely dressed, and that they are talking to him. He hears most beautiful music which is played for him. He has not shown any disposition to injure himself or others. On one occasion, however, he secured a knife and said "he was going to kill a nigger." He is clean in his habits, but very destructive to clothing. He will endeavor to take pieces of glass, nails, etc., into the ward, to deface the furniture, etc., by concealing them in his mouth.

He practises masturbation, but his great propensity is to fondle men, both with his hands and mouth. He has been detected¹ in this loathsome practice a number of times, both in the airing court and at night. This, it appears, was a common practice with him before his admission to the hospital. He is very bold with it, and has ventured to try to make engagements with visitors for such purposes.

He has repeatedly pierced his ears with pins, and twice with an eighth of an inch wire. When asked why he does such acts as defacing the walls, tearing his clothes, etc., he has said, "to let my upper ten out!" at the same time laughing and acting in a most silly manner. He says his name is Jane, and that he is a girl. He is fond of looking in the mirror. He talks in a squeaking, effeminate voice.

¹ His overtures appear to be most gladly received by some epileptics who are known to be masturbators.